

CONGRATS TO ...



UM Opera Theatre and the UM Symphony teamed up on “The Legend of Orpheus.”

Two University of Montana performing arts groups, **UM Opera Theatre** and the **UM Symphony**, whose joint production of “The Legend of Orpheus,” performed in February 2014, has won first prize in the Opera Production Competition sponsored by the National Opera Association. UM professors **Anne Basinski** (stage director), **Luis Millàn** (conductor), **David Cody** (musical director), and **Joy French** (choreographer) collaborated with scenic, costume and lighting designers at MCT Community Theatre to produce this unique opera. Basinski, Millàn and Cody chose music by various composers from the 17th and 18th centuries and wrote their own version of the Orpheus myth, changing the lyrics to fit the story. “Frankly, getting to ‘hand-pick’ some of the most beautiful music ever and weave it into an evening to show our students’ talent, well, that can only be described as a labor of love!” says Basinski. “The students grew to love the material greatly, and they were intrigued, excited, and proud to participate in an opera built especially for them.” UM Opera Theatre took first place in the 2013 Collegiate Opera Scenes competition, also sponsored by the NOA. This is the second time UM Opera Theatre and the Symphony Orchestra have won the coveted opera production award; they also won in 2006 for their production of Mozart’s “The Marriage of Figaro.” The award will be presented in January at the National Opera Association convention in Greensborough, NC. Basinski and Cody will also discuss the development of the opera at the convention in a presentation titled “DIY Baroque Pastiche!” Through this annual competition, the NOA seeks to encourage and reward creative, high-quality opera productions in professional companies and college programs across the U.S. Opera directors enter the competition by submitting a video recording of a live performance to a panel of judges, who evaluate each opera, select winners and provide comments for the director.



Jason DeShaw

Montana country-singer **Jason DeShaw** receive NAMI’s (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Lionel Aldridge Champions Award. This award recognizes an individual living with a mental illness who has exhibited courage, leadership, and service on behalf of all people living with mental illness. In selecting DeShaw for this award, the NAMI Board recognized him for his efforts to be a voice for those who struggle with mental illness. DeShaw received the Champions Award in September

at the 2014 NAMI National Convention in Washington, DC, where he performed for the attendees. Vice President Joe Biden also received an award that night. DeShaw, who grew up in eastern Montana, has been performing across the U.S., Canada and Europe since 2003, released five albums and opened for several national acts. In 2010, he was diagnosed as having a bipolar disorder and alcoholism. Since then, he’s become an advocate for those suffering from mental illness and a proponent of addiction recovery, and has performed several times in the forensic lockdown unit of the Montana State Psychiatric Hospital. Grammy-winning songwriter Kostas is producing his new album, *Serenity in the Storm*, and Emmy-winning filmmaker Justin Lubke is filming a documentary on DeShaw.

Former Helena musicians **Max Hatt** and **Edda Glass**, who won the 13th annual Mountain Stage NewSong Contest. As grand-prize winners, the duo will perform on NPR’s Mountain Stage, at the Sundance Film Festival, and in their own Lincoln Center concert. They will also make an EP with producer Pat Sansone of Wilco and Autumn Defense. According to Gar Ragland, NewSong’s director and co-founder, “Among this year’s talent, the songs and performance sensibilities of Max Hatt/Edda Glass often defied categorization, making them arguably the most distinctive finalist act – let alone winner – we’ve ever had in the program’s 13-year history.



Edda Glass and Max Hat (Photo by Steve Pickel)

We’re excited to introduce their music to a broader audience.” The duo, whose influences range from “Girl from Ipanema” to Neil Young, say they want to create songs that are “immediately accessible and beautiful, but with the musical depth and richness of jazz – so the more you listen the more you get.”

The **Delphian Choir** of Great Falls High School, which earned second place in the youth and high school chorus division of The American Prize. The American Prize is a series of competitions unique in scope and structure, designed to recognize and reward the best performing artists, ensembles and composers in the United States based on submitted recordings. The Delphian Choir consists of 40 students, sophomores through seniors, and membership is by audition. Their recordings, submitted by choir director Patrick Ryan, were praised by judges for “... wonderful maturity, connectivity, and sensitivity.”

Storyhill, the Bozeman-grown duo of **Chris Cunningham** and **John Hermanson**, who will set sail in March aboard A Prairie Home Companion Cruise of the eastern Caribbean. The cruise, which includes the radio program’s longtime host and creator Garrison Keillor, departs from Fort Lauderdale with stops in Grand Turk, San Juan, St. Maarten, and Half Moon Cay.



Horses are herded through Browning in preparation for the annual North American Indian Days rodeo. (Photo by Donnie Sexton)

Donnie Sexton, Montana Office of Tourism publicity manager and staff photographer, who finished third and won a Bronze Award in the 2015 Bill Muster Photo Competition for Photographer of the Year. The competition, presented by the Society of American Travel Writers, honors travel photographers around the world. This year’s contest received more than 1,400 entries. To see Sexton’s images go to www.donniesexton.com.

Bigfork photographer **Lauren Grabelle** whose nine photos accompany a *New York Times* story, “Climate Change Threatens to Strip the Identity of Glacier National Park,” published Nov. 22. The artist is the curator for “Phototaxis,” an annual one-day showing of works by emerging and established photographers, held outdoors in the Mission Valley.

Kalispell artist **Marshall Noice**, whose work was selected for inclusion in the Gilcrease Museum’s Collectors’ Reserve Art Sale, held Nov. 6 in Tulsa, OK. This year marks the 10th time that Noice has been invited to submit work for the prestigious art sale that showcases western artists and benefits the Gilcrease’s acquisition fund. Noice was the only artist among the 75 participants invited to perform a live painting demonstration on the evening prior to the sale; the Collectors’ Reserve Art Show was on display Oct. 25-Nov. 6. Noice was also invited to submit three of his miniature works for the Small Works, Great Wonders Winter Art Sale, held Nov. 14 at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City.



“Deep Shadows, Buffalo Hill” by Marshall Noice

Livingston sculptor **Amber Jean**, who was selected from more than 6,000 applicants to participate in Artprize, Sept. 24-Oct. 12 in Grand Rapids, MI. The artist’s sculptural trees drew constant crowds and were voted into the “Top 25” in her category. Jean created the sculpture installation, “I Never Promised You a Rose Garden,” in the aftermath of her father’s death from cancer. ArtPrize is an international art competition, open to any artist and decided by public vote. It invites artists to try out new ideas on a large and diverse population of people and seeks to broaden the critical dialogue around contemporary art by awarding the world’s largest art prize, at \$560,000. ArtPrize 2014 included 1,536 entries representing 51 countries and 42 U.S. territories.



Amber Jean with “I Never Promised You a Rose Garden”



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Congrats compiled by Kristi Niemeyer for *State of the Arts*